

ANAND BHAWAN

Allahabad, November 10, 1937

Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, M. L. A.

Mustafa Castle

Meerut

My dear Nawab Sahab,

I am taking the liberty of writing to you as I am greatly distressed at the turn events have taken. The kind of things that are being said and written are likely to accentuate communal feelings very greatly and lead inevitably to great bitterness and possibly trouble. I am sure you want to avoid this as much as I do. During election contests exaggerated statements are often made which normally one would hesitate to say. Even so it has been my desire to prevent any such exaggeration from disfiguring our work and whenever my attention has been drawn to it, I have taken some action in the matter.

During the Bundelkhand election and even more so during the Bijnor election much was said on behalf of the Muslim League which astonished and distressed me. Still I thought that the fever of election held people and that this would pass. But I find that this continues and the violence of the speeches and writings is not only not conducive to clear thought, but can only lead to violence in action.

I do not quite know what our differences are in politics. I had imagined that they were not very great. But, whatever they might be, I am sure you will agree with me that it is highly desirable for all of us to keep

I gladly went although it involved upsetting my programme. We failed to agree about the wording of that resolution but our discussion clarified matters and showed that there was no great fundamental difference.

The principal object of my writing to you, however, is to draw your attention to the fantastic statements that have been and are being made by many people on behalf of the Muslim League. I cannot imagine that you agree with them and yet these statements go uncontradicted. And not only statements but acts which are not condemned. For instance, after the Bijnor election a volunteer on behalf of the Muslim League stabbed one of our respected workers in the train. The volunteer might have got excited and I have no particular grievance against him, but the fact that this incident did not draw any condemnation from the leaders of the Muslim League surprised and distressed me.

Other kinds of violence have also been indulged in and, to my knowledge, incitements to violence have been, and are, frequent. The encouragement of this type of speech and activity can only lead to deplorable results.

The greatest stress has been laid during the Bijnor election campaign and subsequently on the fact that Islam is in danger and that the Congress is out to destroy Islam. Has this, or can it have, an atom of truth in it? Is it a fair statement even at election time? I would beg of you to consider this, for it hurts me to see such remarks made by responsible persons and responsible organisations. We are a political organisation working for political ends, which, of necessity, must be alike for Hindu and Muslim as well as other religious communities. We have declared in the most unequivocal terms that full religious and cultural freedom is guaranteed to every one and every group. Even if we had not so declared, is it conceivable by the wildest stretch of imagination that Islam can be suppressed by the Hindus

respected colleagues of the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema* is so patently absurd that it is almost ludicrous. It was said to be supported by a letter which I wrote to Rafi Ahmad Kidwai at the time of the Bundelkhand election. I sent this letter to the press sometime back. I also sent a copy direct to Mr. Jinnah. Probably you have seen it. Do you think there is anything the least bit improper in it?

I have been accused, in a number of newspapers supporting the Muslim League, of having snatched away and torn off every flag bearing Allah-o-Akbar in Najibabad. This is a complete lie without the shadow of a foundation. I have no recollection of even seeing such a flag in Najibabad. As you know I move about in large crowds and anything that I do can be seen by thousands of persons.

It has been stated by Maulana Shaukat Ali that the peasant voters in Bijnor were threatened by Tehsildars, Patwaris, Mahajans and landlords and thus induced to vote for the Congress candidates. Further they were harassed at the polling stations if they came to support the Muslim League. I am not aware of any such incidents but if you can draw my attention to any I shall certainly inquire.

Dr. K. M. Ashraf has been made a special target and all manner of false statements have been attributed to him. It has been stated that he declared at the Ahrar Conference that unlike the Russians, Mussolini and Hitler, we shall destroy every relic of religion and kill every religious person. It passes one's belief how such astounding lies can be given currency.

Information reaches us from our local committees that groups of workers for the Muslim League go about from village to village shouting offensive slogans, such as '*Congress Murdabad*' '*Gandhi Murdabad*,' '*Hindu Kafir hain unko marne se ham bahisht jawenge*.' Written complaints to this effect have reached Congress offices.

ies and decencies of life? You and I and many of us have been entangled in public affairs for a long stretch of years and we have seen many ups and downs. We have, I hope, a measure of respect for each other. We came to politics not to find a profession, for we could have done well otherwise also. We came because we wanted to work for an objective we had at heart. We tried to live up to certain ideals, and even when sorrow and difficulty encompassed us, the thought of that objective and those ideals kept us going. It has not been the politician's game of electioneering that has kept us up to the mark. Elections come and go; we win or lose. But there are other things in life which have attracted us and given us strength even when disaster seemed to threaten us. But if those things go, life itself would lose its flavour, and public affairs would become a curse and an abomination.

I have written to you at great length and told you what I had in my heart. You will forgive me. I am distressed at the shaping of events and I want, with your help, to stop this rot.

One thing more. If you have any grievance or complaint against the Congress or its methods during the election or at any other time, I hope you will not hesitate to let me know, even as I have written to you frankly. We are a large organisation and things may be done on our behalf which are undesirable. We try to stop them whenever we can get hold of them.

Yours sincerely
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

During elections many persons who have no connection with the League, but are interested in its candidate also go about preaching for which the League cannot be held responsible.

You are perfectly right when you say that we should conform to a certain standard in our public work and should not unnecessarily arouse religious passions and animosities, but I make bold to say that this advice is as much needed by the Moulvies and propagandists employed by the Congress to popularise its policy and programme among the Muslim masses, as by the Leaguers. I wonder whether the speeches delivered by the Ahrar leaders who are today espousing the Congress cause have ever been reported to you. I also do not quite know whether you ever read Vernacular papers in which they are often reproduced. If you have not done so, I cannot possibly describe here the filthy abuses of the Muslim League and its leaders in which these heroic gentlemen indulge. Suffice it to say that their speeches often verge on obscenity and vulgarity ; yet they are received everywhere by Congressmen with acclamations and commissioned by Congress Committees to plead the cause of their candidates in every election. I am afraid that your workers purposely refrain from furnishing you with informations which would not be to their credit. It is not my intention to enumerate here our grievances against those who have been working or speaking on behalf of the Congress, nor do I propose to refer at any length to the Anti-Muslim League propaganda which has been carried on for several months past by the so-called nationalist press both English and Vernacular. I shall, however, draw your attention to a drama published in a paper called 'Hindustan' of which the Hon. the Premier of the U. P. is supposed to be a Director. I should like to know what you think of it after you have read it. Then again, please, read the speech delivered at the Punjab

people often stoop to all kinds of things and address appeals to the lowest instincts and sentiments of the masses. This is not peculiar to India but it is prevalent in most countries having democratic constitutions. Three more bye-elections are being hotly contested by the two organisations which, I have no doubt, will further aggravate communal feelings. Undue importance is being given to the success at these elections, not so much by the League as by the Congress, for it challenges the right of the League to represent Musalmans. It is possible that the situation may improve after the elections are over, though I am not sure whether the mass contact movement which is being carried on aggressively by the Congress among the Muslims, will not continue to cause friction and maintain the present tension.

You have very kindly asked me to define our points of agreement and points of difference, but I think, having regard to our readiness to work in the Legislature on the basis of Wardha Programme which, as you say is fairly comprehensive, it is now for you to point out where you still differ from us. With a view to help you to study the whole question I am attaching to this the resolutions of the All India Muslim League, passed at its annual session held at Lucknow in October last, together with a copy of our Election manifesto. You will note from these resolutions that the League has altered its creed and has democratised its constitution. They will also indicate, I have no doubt, that as far as the interest of the whole country is concerned, there is not much difference between the policies and programmes of the two organisations. In this connection I may be permitted the liberty of stating that if this mass contact movement had not been thrust upon us and if the Muslim League Parties had not in the various Legislatures been so contemptuously treated by the Congress, wherever they happened to be in majority, the Musalmans would have been nearer the

tions for solving this difficult question and I am sure it will receive approbation from every fair-minded man.

I have already made my observations on the "fantastic statements" purported to have been made by some Muslim Leaguers in Bijnor and elsewhere. All that I wish to say here is that Local Congress Committees should be directed to draw the attention to the Local Muslim Leagues whenever people are found indulging in such reckless and irresponsible talk.

You complain that no responsible Muslim Leaguer has condemned the violence perpetrated by a League volunteer on a Congress Muslim worker in a running train, I may tell you in this connection, that we instituted an enquiry into this incident and found that the volunteer in question had sufficient provocation to justify the act. I think the less said about this incident the better. Moreover, as the case is still sub-judice, it will not therefore be proper to say more on the subject.

I am sorry that you should think that the Muslim Leaguers encourage resort to violence. There is no foundation for such an assumption.

It is not the Muslim Leaguers who have raised the cry of 'Islam in danger,' it is our opponents who have put this into our mouths. Every Muslim believes that Islam can never be in danger.

You rightly deprecate the charges of bribery levelled against your colleagues of the Jamiat-ul-Ulcma. But what are they in comparison to the most atrocious charges that are being laid daily against Moulana Shokat Ali by Congress Muslims. They only demonstrate our moral degradation.

I had also heard at Bijnor that you had snatched away a Congress flag from the hand of a volunteer on which 'Allah-o-Akbar' was inscribed, because you considered it an unauthorised innovation. I am gratified to learn that there was no shadow of foundation for

ANAND BHAWAN

Allahabad, December 26, 1937

Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, M.L.A.
Legislative Assembly
Lucknow

My dear Nawab Sahab,

I must apologise to you for the delay in answering your letter of December 1st. It reached me about the middle of the month on my return from Assam and I have been overwhelmed with work since then.

You suggest that I have been hasty in arriving at certain conclusions on the basis of information supplied by interested parties. It may be so and perhaps on a fuller consideration of all the evidence I might vary my opinion. Indeed I wrote to you in order to balance the facts and accusations in my possession with such as you might draw my attention to. Any person, however judicial-minded he might be, is invariably influenced to some extent by what he sees and hears. I have seen something and I have heard a great deal about the activities of some of the workers on behalf of the League and I have been influenced thereby. But essentially my distress was due to the whole background of the Muslim League propaganda, as evidenced by their official leaflets and notices and other statements. All this was intensely communal and anti-Congress. Political questions were hardly referred to and the stress was on religious and communal questions, which did not rise at all. This seems to me a grave disservice to any community and to the nation, for progress comes through the development of the political mentality in a group. Nationalism is obviously a higher ideal than communalism in so far as politics is concerned.

I am writing this reply in some haste and therefore

politically. That is a welcome advance. But the background does not fit in with this ; indeed it is in direct contradiction with it. Take again the fact that many of the present leaders of the Muslim League (I do not refer to you or to Mr. Jinnah) sided completely with the British Government throughout our struggles with it, and some of them actively cooperated with the most reactionary conservatives and diehards in England. Am I to understand that they are converts to independence and direct action now ?

One particular statement in your letter has surprised me exceedingly. This is about the stabbing incident after the Bijnor election. You say that after inquiry you found that the volunteer who stabbed a Congress worker had sufficient provocation to justify the act. Now this seems to me very strange. My own information is that the person stabbed is an exceedingly mild and quiet individual and in fact that he was probably stabbed in error for someone else. But, even otherwise, do you think that a provocative remark is enough to justify stabbing ?

You draw my attention to offensive remarks and statements made by persons working on behalf of the Congress. You agree, I think, that Congressmen as such have not made them but that some Moulvies and Ahraris have done so. It may be so and I am exceedingly sorry for it. One or two instances were brought to my notice during my election tours and I expressed my strong disapproval of them. Certainly I am prepared to condemn all such remarks by whomsoever made. Unfortunately I seldom have time to see the Urdu or Hindi press and cannot follow its outbursts. As for the so-called nationalist press in English there has certainly been anti-Muslim League propaganda but this has been political I suppose. I do not remember seeing anything personal. In any event please remember that the Congress does not control any single such newspaper. They

We are a political organisation with our doors open to all and trying to function on the national plane. In the interests of Indian unity and freedom it is essential that there should be such an organisation. There is no other. It may be that occasionally this organisation errs in a communal or group matter. If so every effort must be made to put it right. To attack it as an organisation and to try to weaken it is to attack the conception of Indian unity itself and of nationalism and freedom. What will take its place? And what of all of us if there is no such organisation?

We go to elections of course in the hope of winning a seat. But I hope you will remember that we aim higher. Winning seats does not carry us far. We are out to develop the people politically and to organise them for the fight for freedom. Elections give us an opportunity for this and so we welcome them. An election run on personal issues or other side issues is of no use to us whatsoever; indeed it injures our cause.

You refer to the belief that the Congress is trying to destroy Muslim solidarity. That is often said but I do not understand it at all. There can be and should be religious or cultural solidarity. But when we enter the political plane, the solidarity is national not communal; when we enter the economic plane the solidarity is economic. The Congress is out to build up national solidarity and at the same time to preserve in every way possible the cultural solidarity of different groups.

It is very unfair of any one to charge Muslim supporters of the Congress with being financed by the Congress. Naturally in our elections we help our candidates, Hindu or Muslim. Apart from this what is meant? If it is hinted at that Muslims in the Congress are there for love of money it is a calumny and a falsehood. Our finances are perfectly above board and can be inspected. In our various offices there are a number of Hindu as well as Muslim whole time workers who are

that even without the issue of challenges, any statement or proposal by Mr. Jinnah will always have the most careful consideration. We are always prepared to sit down and consider any of the problems which afflict India. So far as the minorities question is concerned, it is the declared and well-established policy of the Congress not only to do full justice to them, but to go even beyond that in order to inspire confidence and goodwill in them. The Congress can conceive of no freedom for India which is not an equal freedom for all the various religious communities which inhabit India and in which all do not share equally and have full opportunities of growth and development. So far as religious and cultural matters are concerned it has given the fullest possible assurances and declared that these should be incorporated in our fundamental rights in the constitution. A further assurance has been given in regard to personal law. In regard to certain political rights, the Communal Award stands for the present and we have stated repeatedly that we seek no change except with the concurrence of those concerned. We have further declared that we shall stand by the provisional agreement which was arrived at between Babu Rajendra Prasad, acting as Congress President, and Mr. Jinnah. What remains? If there is anything of importance left over, let us have it out by all means and consider it. My difficulty is that I do not know what the argument is about.

Essentially the Congress is a political body acting on the national and political plane, and inevitably dealing with economic questions. All these overlap communal and religious boundaries. Because of the strength that has come to the Congress from the organised masses of this country, and because of the growing importance of India, the Congress functions also to some extent on the international plane. This is bound to grow. This also has nothing to do with religious or

grapple with them the basic problems must be solved. In facing these basic problems of Federation and Independence and poverty and unemployment we come up against great vested interests, imperialistic and semi-feudal. The recent decisions of the Muslim League lead me to hope that that organisation is beginning to think of these problems in the same light as we have done for so many years. If so, let us cooperate by all means with each other and with all other anti-imperialist elements in the country in this fight for freedom, whether the method of fighting is by direct action or otherwise.

May I express the hope that any further approach to the communal or minorities question will be a dispassionate one, and will not seek to rouse bitterness and hatred which can never help in the consideration of any problem. In this dynamic and revolutionary age, pregnant with big possibility, those of us, who have a measure of influence with our countrymen, dare not lose sight of the big things or encourage passions which weaken us and lower us in the world's esteem.

Frontier Mail
New Year's Day, 1938

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Lucknow, Jan. 6, 1938

My dear Panditji,

Very many thanks for sending me a copy of the statement you have issued to the Press. I received it just as I was leaving Meerut. I cordially welcome it and congratulate you on your statesmanship in making the position of the Congress clear at an opportune moment. I have no doubt that it will elicit a suitable response from Mr. Jinnah. I agree with you that Mr. Fazlul Huq's speech as reported in the Press shows not only

MUSTAFA CASTLE

Meerut, January 16, 1938

My dear Panditji,

I have purposely held back my reply to your last letter, for I did not like to inflict it upon you at a time when you had suffered a grievous bereavement by the demise of your revered mother.

I am glad to know that you are also of the opinion, that it is not desirable to continue a discussion of personal complaints and allegations. Besides involving a waste of time and energy it does not conduce to the attainment of the object you had in view when you started this correspondence, that is, the removal of communal tension and the establishment of more harmonious relations between the two organisations. I shall, therefore, refrain from a recital of fresh complaints which have reached me since I wrote to you last. There are, however, some statements in your letter on which I must make a few comments in defence of the organisation with which I am connected. You observe that you feel distressed at the "whole back-ground of the Muslim League propaganda" which you characterise as "intensely religious, communal and Anti-Congress." Now, I ask you, is it fair to cast the whole blame for this on the Muslim League? Can the Congress have the temerity to deny that its own propaganda among the Muslim masses has been free from these blemishes? Has it not in the recent bye-elections and in its mass contact movement utilised to the fullest extent the religious and spiritual influence of eminent Muslim theologians, and, through them done its best to exploit the religious sentiments of the ignorant masses in every conceivable manner. Believe me, among the Musalmans these Ulemas are held in high esteem not because of their extreme political views but because of their religious erudition and spiritual attainments. An ordinary Muslim

With regard to the flag issue, all I need say here is that I am not aware that any Muslim Organisation has recognised the tri-colour flag as the national flag. I have always understood it to be the Congress flag. I have also some recollection that when a controversy was raised by the Sikhs about its colours it was authoritatively stated that its colours did not have any communal significance. I do not know whether the Hindu Maha Sabha or the Christian community treat the tri-colour flag as the national flag.

I can well appreciate and sympathise with the distress of a man like yourself for whose sincerity of purpose and honesty of profession I have profound respect, at the communal and separatist tendencies of the present day politics but I would beg of you if you wish to set things right, not, to be swayed by your prejudices against persons who do not see eye to eye with you at the present moment and condemn them as communalists. You must seriously ponder why the Congress has failed to inspire confidence in the minority communities and has been unable to carry with it even an appreciable number of the Muslim community in spite of its oft-proclaimed resolutions guaranteeing religious and cultural liberty to the various communities. To me it seems that the bulk of the Hindu community in spite of its pretensions of nationalism are still imbued with narrow communalism. Its social exclusiveness and separatism are not conducive to the evolution of national consciousness and sentiments of nationality of which nationalism is only a manifestation.

You say that many of the present leaders of the Muslim League are those who sided with British Govt. during the last struggle with the Govt. I hold no brief for them. All I can say is that they have not resigned from our organisation after the alteration effected in our creed. This creed was changed without any protest from them so I take it they have reconciled themselves

facts only because you have gone out of your way to call my remarks unfair.

Before I conclude I must mention a personal grievance. You are reported to have said at some public meeting in the Saharanpur district when interrupted by a Muslim League volunteer that the League was creating all this trouble because "Ismail Khan wanted two Ministerships to which the Congress ministers did not agree." Before I comment on this statement I shall be grateful if you will kindly let me know whether your statement has been correctly reported.

Yours sincerely
MOHAMMAD ISMAIL KHAN

MUSTAFA CASTLE
Meerut, January 29, 1938

My dear Panditji,

I thank you for your letter of Jan. the 18th in which you kindly invite me to state 'the points in dispute.' I would have gladly complied with your wishes, but in view of the fact that the Council of the All India Muslim League is meeting tomorrow to consider your and Mr. Jinnah's statements, I think it would be more advisable if I write to you after the discussions in the meeting have taken place, so that you may be in possession not only of my personal views but also the official opinion of the Muslim League. I was glad to learn from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad that you have also addressed a letter to Mr. Jinnah.

Yours sincerely
MOHAMMAD ISMAIL KHAN

Wardha, February 5, 1938

Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan
Mustafa Castle
Meerut

My dear Nawab Sahab,

To continue my letter of yesterday's date.

The Congress mass contact movement has never been thought of in terms of Muslims only or confined to them. It was thought of in terms of extending the organisation and influence of the Congress among all classes of people. In a sense it has been in existence for many years but it took more pointed shape at the Lucknow Congress of 1936. No mention was made of Muslims at the time. Later on, and quite apart from elections, I laid stress on carrying it on more particularly amongst the Muslims. The elections came and afterwards again we emphasised it. This was in furtherance of our general programme as a political body. It was not directed against the Muslim League.

Naturally we welcomed noted Muslim Ulemas when they joined the Congress. We welcomed other Muslims also who were politicians and economists. So far as we were concerned we had no desire to emphasise the religious aspect of any question through these Ulemas. Some of these Ulemas were old colleagues of ours in the Congress or the Khalifat movement, and though their viewpoint was not purely political, it was definitely political in most matters that concerned us. You are right in saying that during the elections many of these Ulemas were requested to help. The candidates or their organisers made special efforts to obtain their assistance. There was nothing unnatural about this. I have learnt for the first time from your letter that someone working for our candidate threatened to

ainly determined to represent various communities, green being for Muslims and white for other minorities. We did try later not to lay stress on the communal reason for the colours as we wanted it to be considered the common national flag of all. Maulana Mohammad Ali delivered any number of eloquent orations on the National Flag as representing the unity of India and all communities.

It is obvious that India must have a national flag, a flag which all can call their own. A communal flag cannot possibly take its place and it is hardly proper to put up any communal flag on public buildings used by people of all communities. During the past 17 years the National Flag has become very popular all over India and it has been endeared to us by any number of sacrifices and even deaths to protect its honour.

You are perfectly right in saying that many Hindus, so also many Muslims, are swayed by communal feelings. But the point is : what lead we must give, what objective we have, and what methods we pursue. If we do anything that increases communalism and separatism, then we do injury both to our community and to the nation.

You are mistaken if you think that the Congress has neglected other groups or minorities in India and is concentrating on the Muslims only. You know that we have fought the Hindu Mahasabha and disabled it politically. We have done effective and successful work among the Christian masses in the South. We have approached the Sikhs, Parsis, and Jews. Our policy is the same throughout. Naturally, you will agree, the Muslims have a special importance and we desire to gain their good-will. But allow me to tell you that there has been no liberal financing of any body. Our income is almost entirely derived from four anna subscriptions.

There is no question of the Congress trying to break

the solidarity of the Muslims or any other community. It is on the political field that we make appeal and thus want to make a common platform for all.

As for Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim, you are right in saying that he did not join the Civil Disobedience movement. But he has long been a member and office-bearer of a local Congress Committee and a member of the Swaraj Party in the Legislature. I do not know why he stood as a Muslim League candidate. One of the reasons probably was because at the time there was no apparent conflict between the Congress and the League.

I enclose copies of the correspondence I have had with Mr. Jinnah.

Yours sincerely,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Lucknow January 18, 1938

M. A. Jinnah Esqr.
Barrister-at-Law
Mount Pleasant Road
Malabar Hill, Bombay

Dear Jinnah,

I have read the statement you issued recently to the press with care. I am afraid we approach the question from differing viewpoints and I feel that your approach is not very helpful. But I entirely agree with you that an argument carried on through the medium of the press is not desirable. Indeed I had decided not to issue press statements on the subject, but after your Calcutta speech, in which you mentioned my name and issued some kind of a "challenge" to me, I felt that a public statement was unavoidable. Hence my statement, in which I tried to avoid unnecessary controversy.

You know perhaps that for some months past I have been in correspondence with Nawab Ismail Khan on this subject and I have been anxious to find out what the points of difference and agreement were. I am afraid I do not know this yet and your last statement does not help. I would feel grateful to you if you could kindly throw some light on this and let me know what exactly are the points in dispute which require consideration. I think this will help us all and lead to an avoidance of needless controversy. We can then come to grips with the subject. As I have said in my last statement, we are eager to do everything in our power to put an end to every misapprehension and to endeavour to solve every problem that comes in the way of our developing our public life along right lines and promoting the unity and progress of the Indian people.

I am leaving for Lahore today. From there I go to the Frontier province and return to Allahabad in about ten days' time. Kindly address your reply to Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

LITTLE GIBBS ROAD
MALABAR HILL
Bombay, January 25, 1938

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Allahabad

I am in receipt of your letter of the 18th January, 1938.

I must say that it is very difficult for me to understand it. I fail to see what you are driving at. It does

not suggest any useful proposal of a concrete character, besides approaching me and informing me that, "we approach the question from differing viewpoints", and you further say, "I feel that your approach is not very helpful." You further refer to my Calcutta speech and say, "in which you mention my name and issued some kind of a challenge to me I feel that the public statement was unavoidable hence my statement." But you do not even now give me the purport of my speech and what was the challenge which compelled you to say, what you did, in your statement which you consider unavoidable.

I know nothing about your being in correspondence with Nawab Ismail Khan referred to in your letter.

Finally I note your request that I should let you know "what exactly are the points in dispute which require consideration."

I am glad that you agree with me that the arguments carried on through the medium of the press are not desirable. But do you think that this matter can be discussed, much less solved, by and through correspondence? I am afraid that is equally undesirable.

I may state for your information that I received a letter from Mr. Gandhi dated the 19th October '37 and I replied to him on the 5th November '37, and I am still waiting to hear from him.

I reciprocate the sentiments expressed in the last but one paragraph of your letter at the end of it.

Yours sincerely
M. A. JINNAH

Wardha February 4, 1938

M. A. Jinnah Esq.
Little Gibbs Road
Malabar Hill, Bombay

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

Your letter of the 25th January reached Allahabad on February 1st after I had left. It has been forwarded to me here and reached me yesterday.

I am sorry that my previous letter was difficult to understand. My purpose in writing it was, as I stated, to find out what our points of difference and agreement were. Presumably there are points of difference as you have repeatedly criticised the Congress policy and practice. If these points of difference are noted down and our attention drawn to them it would make their consideration easier. It is possible that some of them may be due to misapprehension and this misapprehension might be removed; it is equally possible that some are more fundamental and then we would try to find a way out or, at any rate, know exactly how and where we stand. When there is a conflict of opinion, a clarification of the opposing opinions is an essential preliminary to their consideration.

I might mention some relatively minor matters which have apparently led to misapprehension. In one of your speeches you referred to being told by someone that a cheque for rupees five lakhs was recently given to the Congress. I am not aware of this and presumably I ought to know. Indeed, to my knowledge, no one has given even a cheque for Rs. 5000 to the Congress for a considerable time.

In the same, or possibly another, speech you referred to the non-cooperation days and stated that while the Aligarh University was forced to close down and many

non-cooperated from it, not a single student non-cooperated from the Benares University. As a matter of fact a very large number of students did in fact non-cooperate from the Benares University. As a result of this a non-official university, the Kashi Vidyapitha, was established in Benares, as also the Gandhi Ashram. Both of these still exist. In the same way the Jamia Millia came into existence in Aligarh and this now flourishes in Delhi.

You have referred in your speeches to the Congress imposing Hindi-Hindustani and trying to crush Urdu. I presume you were misinformed for I am not aware of any attempt on the part of the Congress to injure Urdu. Some time back I wrote an essay on "The Question of Language" which represents, I believe, the Congress viewpoint. It was approved by Mr. Gandhi and by many people unconnected with the Congress and interested in the advancement of Urdu, including Moulvi Abdul Huq, Secretary Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu of Hyderabad. I do not know if you have come across this essay. In any event I am asking my office in Allahabad to send you a copy. If you disagree with the argument or conclusions of this essay I shall be grateful to have your criticisms.

I might mention that the Congress Ministry in Madras is endeavouring to introduce the study of Hindustani in the State schools in the province. They are having primers and text-books prepared especially for the purpose by the Jamia Millia. These primers etc. are to be in two scripts—Devanagari and Urdu—but in identical language, the students having the option of script.

I mention these instances to show how misapprehensions arise. But the real questions at issue are more important and it is in regard to these that clarification is necessary. I presume you are acquainted with the Congress resolutions and statements on minority and

fundamental rights and regarding communal questions. If you so wish it, I can have these sent to you. Many of these were collected together in a comprehensive resolution passed by the Working Committee in Calcutta towards the end of October 1937. About the Communal Award the Congress position has been repeatedly made clear.

The Congress policy as laid down in these resolutions may be incomplete or wrong. If so we shall gladly consider suggestions to complete it or rectify it. Personally I do not see what more can be done by the Congress regarding religious or cultural matters. As for political (communal) questions, the Communal Award, unsatisfactory as it is, holds the field for the present and till such time as it may be altered by mutual agreement of the parties concerned.

In considering wider political questions, the Congress has adhered to certain principles and policies for a number of years, though minor variations have taken place from time to time. Our present policy in the legislatures and outside was defined by a comprehensive resolution passed by the Working Committee at Wardha last year. I was very glad to find from Nawab Ismail Khan and Chowdhry Khaliquzzaman that the U. P. Muslim League, or the U. P. Muslim League Parliamentary Board, accepted this programme. This included our objective of independence, our demand for a constituent assembly, our general attitude to the Constitution Act and the Federation, and our methods of work inside and outside the legislatures. It referred also to our agrarian and labour programmes. Thus there appeared to be a very large measure of agreement between us, not only in regard to fundamentals, but even regarding many details.

In view of this agreement it distressed and surprised me to find that there was so much conflict. I have tried therefore to find out what this conflict is

about. I do not see how I can make any proposal, concrete or vague, when I do not know what the points in issue are. It is true that in reading your speeches I have come across various statements to the effect that the Congress is trying to establish Hindu raj. I am unaware of how this is being done or who is doing it. If any Congress Ministries or the Congress organisation have made mistakes, these should be pointed out to us.

A report of your Calcutta speech appeared in the newspapers at the time and is no doubt available to you and for me to give you a purport of it seemed hardly necessary. In this you state that you are fighting the Congress, that you are fighting the Congress leadership which is misleading the Hindus. Further you have said that you want to bring the Congress High Command to its senses. May I suggest that those who are privileged to advise or lead the Congress have no desire to fight anybody except British Imperialism? In any event, if we mislead or misbehave we have a right to enquire from our critics where and how we have done so.

Further in your Calcutta speech you said: "I have long long ago, months ago now, thrown out a challenge to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and I throw out a challenge now,—let him come and sit with us and let us formulate a constructive programme which will give immediate relief to the poor". It was to this 'challenge' that I referred in my last letter. I do not remember on which previous occasion you had issued a similar challenge to me.

It is always helpful to discuss matters and problems face to face, and, as I have said previously, we are always glad to do so. A short while ago you met Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, one of our most respected leaders, than whom there is no one better fitted to explain the Congress viewpoint in regard to the minorities prob-

lem or any other matter. Whenever necessity arises every one of us will willingly welcome a talk. But even such a talk is likely to be vague and infructuous if some clarification of ideas does not take place previously. Correspondence helps in this process and sometimes is even preferable as it is more precise than talk. I trust therefore that you will help in clarifying the position by telling us where we differ and how you would like this difference to end. You have also criticised the Congress in vigorous language, as you were no doubt entitled to do. But are we not entitled to ask you to substantiate those criticisms in private at least, if not in public?

I have inquired from Mr. Gandhi about your letter to him dated the 5th November, 1937. He received it in Calcutta when he was lying ill there and he felt that it needed no answer. Your letter had been in answer to his and the matter seemed to end there for the time being. He was good enough to show me his letter and yours and it seemed to me that no particular reply was called for. I understand that he wrote to you yesterday.

I hope to be in Allahabad by the 9th February.

Yours sincerely
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

8B, HARDINGE AVENUE
New-Delhi February, 17, 1938

Dear Pandit Jawaharlal,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 4th February. You have now flung at me more complaints and grievances of trifling character. Evidently you rely on that section of the press which is bent on misrepresenting and vilifying me, but I am glad that you say "I mention these instances to show how misapprehension arises : 'but the real question at issue is more important and it is in regard to this that clarification is necessary' ". Therefore I don't think any useful purpose will be served to carry on correspondence with regard to the various matters mentioned in your letter. You will please not introduce matters which you may have discussed with Nawab Ismail Khan or Chowdhry Khaliquzzaman or anybody else. These again will lead to references and cross-references and the matter will never end.

As regards my Calcutta speech, the word, 'challenge' is obviously due to the imagination of the reporter for the very context shows clearly that it was an invitation. However the discussion of all these matters in correspondence will lead us nowhere. I do not believe in the doctrine which you lay down 'but are we not entitled to ask you to substantiate all these criticisms in private at least if not in public' : I for my part make no such distinction. I am prepared to substantiate anything that I have said publicly, provided it is correctly reported. The crux of your letter on the real vital point of the Hindu-Muslim unity is a repetition of what you said in your previous letter, namely, that you want me to note down 'the points of difference' and discuss them through and by means of correspondence—a method which I made it clear in my last letter is highly undesirable and most inappropriate. I welcome your suggestion when you say 'whenever necessity arose everyone of us would

'willingly welcome a talk.' If you think that necessity has arisen and anyone of you is willing, I shall be glad to see you and equally welcome a talk. The thing is that you prefer talking at each other whereas I prefer talking to each other. Surely you know and you ought to know what are the fundamental points in dispute.

I have received a letter from Mr. Gandhi and I have replied to him a copy of which I am enclosing herewith.

Yours sincerely
M. A. JINNAH

GULSHAN VILLA
OOMER PARK
Bombay, February 25, 1938

M. A. Jinnah, Esqr., M.L.A.
8B, Hardinge Avenue
New Delhi

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

Your letter of the 17th February reached me at Haripura. I had no intention of flinging any complaints and grievances at you. In my attempt to find out what your complaints were I read your speeches as reported in the newspapers (usually by a news agency) and noted down some of the points on which you had laid stress. I am glad to know that you have been misrepresented but you have not pointed out where the misrepresentation comes in, nor, so far as I know, have you issued any statement to the press correcting the misrepresentation. May I suggest that it will be worthwhile to correct these errors so that the public might not

be misled? A clear and authoritative statement from you will help us also in understanding what you stand for and what you object to.

I note that you do not wish me to introduce in our correspondence any matters which we may have discussed with Nawab Ismail Khan or Chowdhry Khaliq-uzzaman. I did not know that they represented any different viewpoint from yours. I thought it necessary to draw your attention to the repeated attempts I have been making to find out what the political and communal policy of the Muslim League is and wherein it differs from that of the Congress. You will remember saying last year that the Muslim League had an entirely different policy even on political matters from that of the Congress. Since then the League has changed its objective and its economic outlook and has thus approached nearer to the Congress. I am anxious to find out what the real meaning of these changes is. Without this clarification it is difficult for us to understand the present position.

You say that you do not believe in the doctrine that I lay down, namely: "but are we not entitled to ask you to substantiate all these criticisms in private at least if not in public." Further you say that for your part you make no such distinction and are prepared to substantiate anything that you have said publicly, provided it is correctly reported. If you will read my sentence again you will no doubt observe that I have nowhere laid down any such doctrine as you imagine. I would indeed welcome a public treatment by you of the criticisms made by you. But if you yourself were unwilling to write to the press on the subject, as you indicated in your letter, I put it to you that we were at least entitled to request you to substantiate the criticism in private.

If you have made no criticisms of the Congress, and the press reports are entirely wrong, then of course no question of substantiation arises. All that need be

done is to contradict the press reports. But if criticisms have been made, as presumably they have been, then I would request you to justify them publicly or privately as you might choose. Personally I would prefer the former method.

I am afraid I must confess that I do not yet know what the fundamental points of dispute are. It is for this reason that I have been requesting you to clarify them. So far I have not received any help in this direction. Of course we shall willingly meet you whenever opportunity arises. Our President Subhas Chandra Bose, or Maulana Abul Kalam Azad or I or any other member of the Working Committee can meet you at a suitable opportunity.

But when we meet what are we to discuss? Responsible people with organisations behind them can hardly discuss anything in the air. Some clarification of the issues, some clear statement of what is wanted and what is objected to, is always desirable, otherwise we may not come to grips with the subject. You will remember the argument about what transpired at Delhi in 1935 between you and Babu Rajendra Prasad. There has even been a difference of opinion about the facts. It would be unfortunate if we repeated this performance and then argued about it later.

It is thus highly desirable for us to define the issues first. This is also necessary as we have always to consult many colleagues in regard to any matter affecting Congress policy. There is surely nothing undesirable or inappropriate about this defining of issues by correspondence. It is the usual method adopted between individuals and organisations. May I therefore beg of you to enlighten me?

Yours sincerely,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

NO. 1 HASTINGS ROAD,
New Delhi, March 3, 1938.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,
Anand Bhawan, Allahabad

Dear Pandit Jawaharlal,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 25th February. I regret to find the same spirit running through of making insinuations and innuendoes and raising all sorts of matters of trifling character which are not germane to our present subject with which you started namely, how to find the basis of approach to the most vital and prominent question of Hindu-Muslim unity. You wind up your letter by insisting upon the course that I should formulate the points in dispute and submit to you for your consideration and then carry on correspondence with you. This method I have already stated in my considered opinion is undesirable and inappropriate. The method you insist upon may be appropriate between two litigants and that is followed by solicitors on behalf of their clients^c but national issues cannot be settled like that.

When you say 'that I am afraid I must confess that I do not know what the fundamental points in dispute are' I am only amazed at your ignorance. This matter has been tackled since 1925 right upto 1935 by the most prominent leaders in the country and so far no solution has been found. I would beg of you to study it and do not take up a self-complacent attitude and if you are earnest I don't think you will find much difficulty in realizing what the main points in dispute are because they have been constantly mentioned both in the press and public platform even very recently.

Yours sincerely
M. A. JINNAH

Allahabad, March 8, 1938

M. A. Jinnah Esqr., M.L.A.
1, Hastings Road
New Delhi

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

Thank you for your letter of March 3rd. I am afraid our letters to each other repeat themselves. I go on requesting you to tell us what exactly are the points in dispute which have to be discussed and you go on insisting that this should not be done by correspondence. At the same time you have pointed out that the main points in dispute have been constantly, and very recently, discussed in the press and public platform. I have carefully followed press statements and your public speeches. In my effort to discover these points of dispute I enumerated some of the criticisms which you were reported to have made in public speeches. In your reply you stated that you were misreported, but you did not say what the correct report should have been. Further you said that these were minor and trifling matters, but again you did not point out what the major matters were. You will perceive my difficulty. I hope I am not making any insinuations or innuendoes, as you suggest in your last letter. Certainly it is not my intention to do so, nor to raise trifling matters which are not germane to the present subject. But what are these matters which are germane? It may be that I am dense or not sufficiently acquainted with the intricacies of the problem. If so I deserve to be enlightened. If you will refer me to any recent statement made in the press or platform which will help me in understanding, I shall be grateful.

It is not my desire, may I repeat, to carry on a controversy by correspondence, but only to find out

what the main points of discussion and dispute are. It is surely usual for national issues to be formulated and clarified in this way to facilitate discussion. Both in national and international matters we are frequently adopting this course.

You are perfectly right in saying that this matter has been tackled since 1925 repeatedly. Do you not think that this very history warns us not to approach it in a vague manner without clear ideas as to what we object to and what we want? Apart from this, much has happened during these past few years which has altered the position. For instance the Communal Award. Do you want this discussed with a view to some settlement being arrived at on another basis?

It is obvious that the Congress is exceedingly anxious to remove all causes of misunderstanding and friction. Apart from wider national issues, it would like to do so because such misunderstanding comes in the way of its work. It has frequently considered the problem and passed such resolutions and put forward such proposals as it considered right. I do not wish to discuss as to whether these were right or not. That may be a matter for argument. But according to our lights we tried to do our best. If we did not succeed to the extent we hoped to do that is our misfortune and we shall gladly consider suggestions which might lead to better results.

What are the various aspects of this matter? May I enumerate them?

1. The Communal Award, which includes separate electorates and reservation of seats.
2. Religious guarantees.
3. Cultural protection and guarantees.

Presumably these are the three main heads. There may be some minor matters but I do not refer to them as you wish to concentrate on the main issues.

As regards the Communal Award the position of the Congress has been clarified. If it is your desire to discuss this matter, I should like to know it.

As regards religious and cultural guarantees, the Congress has given as full assurances and guarantees as is possible. If, however, any other guarantees are considered necessary, they should be mentioned. About one of the questions which you have referred to in your speeches, the Language question, I have written to you previously and sent you my brochure. I trust that you agreed with its main conclusions.

Are we going to discuss these matters or some others which I have not mentioned above? Then again the background of all such discussions must necessarily be a certain political and economic one—our struggle for independence, our anti-imperialism, our methods of direct action whenever necessary, our anti-war policy, our attempt to remove the exploitation of the masses, agrarian and labour problems, and the like. I take it that with the re-orientation of the Muslim League's policy there will not be any great difference regarding this anti-imperialist background.

You will forgive me for repeating myself in these letters and for saying the same things over and over again. I do so because I am keenly desirous of your appreciating my viewpoint, which I believe is also the viewpoint of my colleagues in the Congress. I have no desire to take up your time and to spend my time in writing long letters. But my mind demands clarity before it can function effectively or think in terms of any action. Vagueness or an avoidance of real issues cannot lead to satisfactory results. It does seem strange to me that in spite of my repeated requests I am not told what issues have to be discussed.

I understand that Gandhiji has already written to you expressing his readiness to have a talk with you. I am not now the Congress President and thus have not

the same representative capacity, but if I can be of any help in this matter my services are at the disposal of the Congress and I shall galdly meet you and discuss these matters with you.

Yours sincerely,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

1, HASTINGS ROAD,
New-Delhi, March 17, 1938

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
All-India Congress Committee
Swaraj Bhawan
Allahabad

Dear Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,

I have received your letter of the 8th of March, 1938. Your first letter of the 18th of January conveyed to me that you desire to know the points in dispute for the purpose of promoting Hindu-Muslim unity. When in reply I said that the subject-matter cannot be solved through correspondence and it was equally undesirable as discussing matters in the Press, you in your reply of the 4th of February formulated a catalogue of grievances with regard to my supposed criticism of the Congress and utterances which are hardly relevant to the question for our immediate consideration. You went on persisting on the same line and you are still of opinion that those matters, although not germane to the present subject, should be further discussed which I do not propose to do as I have already explained to you in my previous letter.

The question with which we started, as I understood, is of safeguarding the rights and the interests of the

Mussalmans with regard to their religion, culture, language, personal laws and political rights in the national life, the government and the administration of the country. Various suggestions have been made which will satisfy the Mussalmans and create a sense of security and confidence in the majority community. I am surprised when you say in your letter under reply, "But what are these matters which are germane. It may be that I am dense or not sufficiently acquainted with the intricacies of the problems. If so, I deserve to be enlightened. If you will refer me to any recent statement made in the Press or platform which will help me in understanding, I shall be grateful." Perhaps you have heard of the Fourteen Points.

Next, as you say, "Apart from this much has happened during these past few years which has altered the position." Yes, I agree with you, and various suggestions have appeared in the newspapers recently. For instance, if you will refer to the *Statesman*, dated the 12th of February, 1938, there appears an article under the heading "Through Moslem Eyes" (copy enclosed for your convenience). Next, an article in the *New Times*, dated the 1st of March, 1938, dealing with your pronouncement recently made, I believe at Haripura sessions of the Congress, where you are reported to have said :

"I have examined this so-called communal question through the telescope, and if there is nothing what can you see."

This article in the *New Times* appeared on the 1st of March, 1938, making numerous suggestions (copy enclosed for your convenience). Further, you must have seen Mr. Aney's interview where he warned the Congress mentioning some of the points which the Muslim League would demand.

Now, this is enough to show to you that various suggestions that have been made, or are likely to be

made, or are expected to be made, will have to be analysed and ultimately I consider it is the duty of every true nationalist, to whichever party or community he may belong, to make it his business and examine the situation and bring about a pact between the Mussalmans and the Hindus and create a real united front; and it should be as much your anxiety and duty as it is mine, irrespective of the question of the party or the community to which we belong. But if you desire that I should collect all these suggestions and submit to you as a petitioner for you and your colleagues to consider, I am afraid I can't do it nor can I do it for the purpose of carrying on further correspondence with regard to those various points with you. But if you still insist upon that, as you seem to do so when you say in your letter, "My mind demands clarity before it can function effectively or think in terms of any action. Vagueness or an avoidance of real issues could not lead to satisfactory results. It does seem strange to me that in spite of my repeated requests I am not told what issues have to be discussed." This is hardly a correct description or a fair representation, but in that case I would request you to ask the Congress officially to communicate with me to that effect and I shall place the matter before the Council of the All-India Muslim League as you yourself say that you are "not the Congress President and thus have not the same representative capacity but if I can be of any help in this matter my services are at the disposal of the Congress and I shall gladly meet you and discuss these matters with you." As to meeting you and discussing matters with you, I need hardly say that I shall be pleased to do so.

Yours sincerely
M. A. JINNAH

Extract from the NEW TIMES, Lahore dated the 1st March, 1938.

THE COMMUNAL QUESTION

In its last session at Haripura, the Indian National Congress passed a resolution for assuring minorities of their religious and cultural rights. The resolution was moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and was carried. The speech which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made on this occasion was as bad as any speech could be. If the resolution has to be judged in the light of that speech, then it comes to this that the resolution has been passed not in any spirit of seriousness, but merely as a meaningless assurance to satisfy the foolish minorities who are clammering "for the satisfaction of the communal problem." Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru proceeded on the basis that there was really no communal question. We should like to reproduce the trenchant manner in which he put forward the proposition. He said: "I have examined the *so-called communal question* through the telescope and, if there is nothing, what can you see." It appears to us that it is the height of dishonesty to move a resolution with these premises. If there is no minority question, why proceed to pass a resolution? Why not state that there is no minority question. This is not the first time that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has expressed his complete inability to understand or see the communal question. When replying to a statement of Mr. Jinnah, he re-iterated his conviction that in spite of his best endeavour to understand what Mr. Jinnah wanted, he could not get at what he wanted. He seems to think that with the Communal Award which the Congress had opposed, the seats in the Legislature have become assured and now nothing remains to be done. He repeats the offensive statement that the Communal Award is merely a problem created by the middle or

upper classes for the sake of a few seats in the Legislature or appointments in Government service or for Ministerial positions. We should like to tell Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that he has completely mis-understood the position of the Muslim minority and it is a matter of intense pain that the President of an All-India Organisation which claims to represent the entire population of India, should be so completely ignorant of the demands of the Muslim minority. We shall set forth below some of the demands so that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru may not have any occasion hereafter to say that he does not know what more the Muslims want. The Muslim demands are : (1) That the Congress shall henceforth withdraw all opposition to the Communal Award and should cease to prate about it as if it were a negation of nationalism. It may be a negation of nationalism but if the Congress has announced in its statement that it is not opposing the Communal Award, the Muslims want that the Congress should at least stop all agitation for the rescission of the Communal Award. (2) The Communal Award merely settles the question of the representation of the Muslims and of other minorities in the Legislatures of the country. The further question of the representation of the minorities in the services of the country remains. Muslims demand that they are as much entitled to be represented in the services of their mother land as the Hindus and since the Muslims have come to realise by bitter experience that it is impossible for any protection to be extended to Muslim rights in the matter of their representation in the services, it is necessary that the share of the Muslims in the services should be definitely fixed in the constitution and by statutory enactment so that it may not be open to any Hindu head of any department to ride rough shod over Muslim claims in the name of "Efficiency." Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru knows that in the name of efficiency and merit, the rights of Indians to man the services of their country

was denied by the bureaucracy. Today when Congress is in power in 7 Provinces, the Muslims have a right to demand of Congress leaders that they shall unequivocally express themselves in this regard. (3) Muslims demand that the protection of their Personal Law and their culture shall be guaranteed by the statute. And as an acid test of the sincerity of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress in this regard, Muslims demand that the Congress should take in hand the agitation in connection with the Shahidganj mosque and should use its moral pressure to ensure that the Shahidganj mosque is restored to its original position and that the Sikhs desist from profane uses and thereby injuring the religious susceptibilities of the Muslims. (4) Muslims demand that their right to call Azan and perform their religious ceremonies shall not be fettered in any way. We should like to tell Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that in a village, in the Kasur Tehsil, of the Lahore District, known as Raja Jang, the Muslim inhabitants of that place are not allowed by the Sikhs to call out their Azans loudly. With such neighbours, it is necessary to have a statutory guarantee that the religious rights of the Muslims shall not be in any way interfered with and on the advent of Congress rule to demand of the Congress that it shall use its powerful organisation for the prevention of such an event. In this connection we should like to tell Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that the Muslims claim cow slaughter as one of their religious rights and demand that so long as the Sikhs are permitted to carry on Jhatka and to live on Jhatka, the Muslims have every right to insist on their undoubted right to slaughter cows. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is not a very great believer in religious injunctions. He claims to be living on the economic plane and we should like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to know that for a Muslim the question of cow slaughter is a measure of economic necessity and that therefore does it not open to any

Hindu to statutorily prohibit the slaughter of cows.

(5) Muslims demand that their majorities in the Provinces in which they are at present shall not be affected by any territorial redistributions or adjustments. The Muslims are at present in majority in the provinces of Bengal, Punjab, Sind, North-Western Frontier Province and Baluchistan. Let the Congress hold out the guarantee and express its readiness to the incorporation of this guarantee in the Statute that the present distribution of the Muslim population in the various provinces shall not be interfered with through the medium of any territorial distribution of re-adjustment.

(6) The question of national anthem is another matter. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru cannot be unaware that Muslims all over have refused to accept the Bande Matram or any expurgated addition of that anti-Muslim song as a binding national anthem. If Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru cannot succeed in inducing the Hindu majority to drop the use of this song, then let him not talk so tall, and let him realise that the great Hindu mass does not take him seriously except as a strong force to injure the cause of Muslim solidarity.

(7) The question of language and script is another demand of the Muslims. The Muslims insist on Urdu being practically their national language; they want statutory guarantees that the use of the Urdu tongue shall not in any wiser (*sic*) manner be curtailed or damaged.

(8) The question of the representation of the Muslims in the local bodies is another unsolved question. Muslims demand that the principle underlying the communal award, namely, separate electorates and representation according to population strength should apply uniformly in all the various local and other elected bodies from top to bottom.

We can go on multiplying this list but for the present we should like to know the reply of the Congress and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the demands that we have

set forth above. We should like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru fully to understand that the Muslims are more anxious than the Hindus to see complete independence in the real sense of that term established in India. They do not believe in any Muslim Raj for India and will fight a Hindu Raj tooth and nail. They stand for the complete freedom of the country and of all classes inhabiting this country but they shall oppose the establishment of any majority Raj of a kind that will make a clean sweep of the cultural, religious and political guarantees of the various minorities as set forth above. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is under the comforting impression that the questions set forth above are trivial questions but he should reconsider his position in the light of the emphasis and importance which the minorities which are effected by the programme of the Congress place on these matters. After all it is the minorities which are to judge and not the majorities. It appears to us that with the attitude of mind which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru betrayed in his speech and which the seconder of that resolution equally exhibited in his speech, namely, that the question of minorities and majorities was an artificial one and created to suit vested interests, it is obvious that nothing can come out of the talks that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru recently initiated between himself and Mr. Jinnah. If the Congress is in the belief that this reiteration of its inane pledge to the minorities will satisfy them and that they will be taken in by mere words, the Congress is badly mistaken.

*Extract from the STATESMAN, New Delhi Edition,
dated the 12th February, 1938.*

THROUGH MOSLEM EYES

By AIN-EL-MULK

Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru's Bombay statement of January 2 on the Hindu-Moslem question has produced hopeful reactions and the stage has been set for a talk between the leaders of what, for the sake of convenience, may be described as Hindu India and Moslem India. Whether the Jinnah-Jawaharlal talks will produce in 1938 better results than the Jinnah-Prasad talks did in 1935 is yet to be seen. Too much optimism would not, however, be justified. The Pundit, by way of annotating his Bombay statement while addressing the U. P. delegates for Haripura at Lucknow, at the end of January, emphatically asserted that in no case would Congress "give up its principles." That was not a hopeful statement because any acceptable formula or pact that may be evolved by the leaders of the Congress and the League would, one may guess, involve the acquiescence of the Congress in separate electorate (at least for a certain period), coalition Ministries, recognition of the League as the one authoritative and representative organisation of Indian Moslems, modification of its attitude on the question of Hindi and its script, scrapping of Bande Mataram altogether, and possibly a redesigning of the tri-colour flag or at least agreeing to give the flag of the League an equal importance. It is possible that with a little statesmanship on both sides agreement can be reached on all the points without any infringement of the principles of either, but the greatest obstacle to a satisfactory solution would still remain, in the shape of the communalists of the Mahasabha, and the irreconcilables of Bengal,

all of whom are not of the Mahasabha alone. The right of the Congress to speak in the name of Hindus has been openly challenged and even the Jinnah-Prasad formula which did not satisfy the Moslems and nothing on the lines of which is now likely to satisfy them—has been vehemently denounced by Bengal Provincial Conference held at Vishnupur which recently passed an extremely communal resolution, and that the latest utterances of the Congress President-elect on the communal situation generally and the Jinnah-Prasad formula in particular show some restraint. The only thing for Muslims to do in the circumstances is to wait and hope for the best, without relaxing their efforts to add daily to the strength of the League for it will not do to forget that it is the growing power and representative character of the Moslem League which has compelled Congress leaders to recognize the necessity for an understanding with the Moslem community.

I, WOODBURN PARK
Calcutta, April 6, 1938

M. A. Jinnah Esqr. M.L.A.
1 Hastings Road
New Delhi

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

Your letter of the 17th March reached me in the Kumaun Hills where I had gone for a brief holiday. From there I have come to Calcutta. I propose to return to Allahabad today and I shall probably be there for the greater part of April. If it is convenient for you to come there we could meet. Or if it suits you better to go to Lucknow I shall try to go there.

I am glad that you have indicated in your last letter

a number of points which you have in mind. The enclosures you have sent mention these and I take it that they represent your view-point. I was somewhat surprised to see this list as I had no idea that you wanted to discuss many of these matters with us. Some of these are wholly covered by previous decisions of the Congress, some others are hardly capable of discussion.

As far as I can make out from your letter and the enclosures you have sent you wish to discuss the following matters :

1. The Fourteen Points formulated by the Muslim League in 1929.
2. The Congress should withdraw all opposition to the Communal Award and should not describe it as a negation of nationalism.
3. The share of the Muslims in the State services should be definitely fixed in the Constitution by statutory enactment.
4. Muslim Personal Law and culture should be guaranteed by Statute.
5. The Congress should take in hand the agitation in connection with the Shahidganj mosque and should use its moral pressure to enable the Muslims to gain possession of the mosque.
6. The Muslims' right to call Azan and perform their religious ceremonies should not be fettered in any way.
7. Muslims should have freedom to perform cow-slaughter.
8. Muslim majorities in the Provinces, where such majorities exist at present, must not be affected by any territorial redistribution or adjustments.

9. The Bande Mataram song should be given up.
10. Muslims want Urdu to be the national language of India and they desire to have statutory guarantees that the use of Urdu shall not be curtailed or damaged.
11. Muslim representation in local bodies should be governed by the principles underlying the Communal Award, that is separate electorates and population strength.
12. The tri-colour flag should be changed or, alternatively, the flag of the Muslim League should be given equal importance.
13. Recognition of the Muslim League as the one authoritative and representative organisation of Indian Muslims.
14. Coalition ministries.

It is further stated that the formula evolved by you and Bābu Rajendra Prasad in 1935 does not satisfy the Muslims now and nothing on those lines will satisfy them.

It is added that the list given above is not a complete list and that it can be augmented by the addition of further 'demands.' Not knowing these possible and unlimited additions I can say nothing about them. But I should like to deal with the various matters specifically mentioned and to indicate what the Congress attitude has been in regard to them.

But before considering them, the political and economic background of the free India we are working for has to be kept in mind, for ultimately that is the controlling factor. Some of these matters do not arise in considering an independent India or take a particular shape or have little importance. We can discuss them in terms of Indian independence or in terms of the British dominance of India continuing. The Congress

naturally thinks in terms of independence, though it adjusts itself occasionally to the present transitional and temporary phases. It is thus not interested in amendments to the present constitution, but aims at its complete removal and its substitution by a constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly.

Another matter has assumed an urgent and vital significance and this is the exceedingly critical international situation and the possibility of war. This must concern India greatly and affect her struggle for freedom. This must therefore be considered the governing factor of the situation and almost everything else becomes of secondary importance, for all our efforts and petty arguments will be of little avail if the very foundation is upset. The Congress has clearly and repeatedly laid down its policy in the event of such a crisis and stated that it will be no party to imperialist war. Peace, therefore, and Indian independence is its basic policy. The Congress will very gladly and willingly cooperate with the Muslim League and all other organisations and individuals in the furtherance of this policy.

I have carefully looked through the various matters to which you have drawn attention in your letter and its enclosures and I find that there is nothing in them which refers to or touches the economic demands of the masses or affects the all-important questions of poverty and unemployment. For all of us in India these are the vital issues and unless some solution is found for them, we function in vain. The question of State services, howsoever important and worthy of consideration it might be, affects a very small number of people. The peasantry, industrial workers, artisans and petty shopkeepers form the vast majority of the population and they are not improved in any way by any of the demands listed above. Their interests should be paramount.

Many of the 'demands' involve changes of the constitution which we are not in a position to bring

about. Even if some such changes are desirable in themselves, it is not our policy to press for minor constitutional changes. We want to do away completely with the present constitution and replace it by another for a free India.

In the same way the desire for statutory guarantees involves constitutional changes which we cannot give effect to. All we can do is to state that in a future constitution for a free India we want certain guarantees to be incorporated. We have done this in regard to religious, cultural, linguistic and other rights of minorities in the Karachi resolution on Fundamental Rights. We would like these fundamental rights to be made a part of the constitution.

I now deal with the various matters listed above.

1. The Fourteen Points, I had thought, were somewhat out of date. Many of their provisions have been given effect to by the Communal Award and in other ways; some others are entirely acceptable to the Congress; yet others require constitutional changes which, as I have mentioned above, are beyond our present competence. Apart from the matters covered by the Communal Award and those involving a change in the constitution, one or two matters remain which gave rise to differences of opinion and which are still likely to lead to considerable argument.

2. The Congress has clearly stated its attitude towards the Communal Award, and it comes to this that it seeks alterations only on the basis of mutual consent of the parties concerned. I do not understand how any one can take objection to this attitude and policy. If we are asked to describe the Award as not being anti-national, that would be patently false. Even apart from what it gives to various groups, its whole basis and structure are anti-national and come in the way of the development of national unity. As you know it gives an overwhelming and wholly undeserving

weightage to the European elements in certain parts of India. If we think in terms of an independent India we cannot possibly fit in this Award with it. It is true that under stress of circumstances we have sometimes to accept as a temporary measure some thing that is on the face of it anti-national. It is also true that in the matters governed by the Communal Award we can only find a satisfactory and abiding solution by the consent and good-will of the parties concerned. That is the Congress policy.

3. The fixing of the Muslims' share in the State services by statutory enactment necessarily involves the fixing of the shares of other groups and communities similarly. This would mean a rigid and compartmental State structure which will impede progress and development. At the same time it is generally admitted that State appointments should be fairly and adequately distributed and no community should have cause to complain. It is far better to do this by convention and agreement. The Congress is fully alive to this issue and desires to meet the wishes of various groups in the fullest measure, so as to give to all minority communities, as stated in No. 11 of the Fourteen Points, "an adequate share in all the services of the State and in local self-governing bodies having due regard to the requirements of efficiency." The State today is becoming more and more technical and demands expert knowledge in its various departments. It is right that, if a community is backward in this technical and expert knowledge, special efforts should be made to give it this education to bring it up to a higher level.

I understand that at the Unity Conference held at Allahabad in 1933 or thereabouts, a mutually satisfactory solution of this question of State services was arrived at.

4. As regards protection of culture the Congress has declared its willingness to embody this in the fundamental laws of the constitution. It has also

declared that it does not wish to interfere in any way with the personal law of any community.

5. I am considerably surprised at the suggestion that the Congress should take in hand the agitation in connection with the Shahidganj mosque. That is a matter to be decided either legally or by mutual agreement. The Congress prefers in all such matters the way of mutual agreement and its services can always be utilised for this purpose where there is an opening for them and a desire to this effect on the part of the parties concerned. I am glad that the Premier of the Punjab has suggested that this is the only satisfactory way to a solution of the problem.

6. The right to perform religious ceremonies should certainly be guaranteed to all communities. The Congress resolution about this is quite clear. I know nothing about the particular incident relating to a Punjab village which has been referred to. No doubt many instances can be gathered together from various parts of India where petty interferences take place with Hindu, Muslim or Sikh ceremonies. These have to be tactfully dealt with wherever they arise. But the principle is quite clear and should be agreed to.

7. As regards cow-slaughter there has been a great deal of entirely false and unfounded propaganda against the Congress suggesting that the Congress was going to stop it forcibly by legislation. The Congress does not wish to undertake any legislative action in this matter to restrict the established rights of the Muslims.

8. The question of territorial redistribution has not arisen in any way. If and when it arises it must be dealt with on the basis of mutual agreement of the parties concerned.

9. Regarding the Bande Mataram song the Working Committee issued a long statement in October last to which I would invite your attention. First of all it has to be remembered that no formal national anthem

has been adopted by the Congress at any time. It is true, however, that the Bande Mataram song has been intimately associated with Indian nationalism for more than thirty years and numerous associations of sentiment and sacrifice have gathered round it. Popular songs are not made to order, nor can they be successfully imposed. They grow out of public sentiment. During all these thirty or more years the Bande Mataram song was never considered as having any religious significance and was treated as a national song in praise of India. Nor, to my knowledge, was any objection taken to it except on political grounds by the Government. When however some objections were raised, the Working Committee carefully considered the matter and ultimately decided to recommend that certain stanzas, which contained certain allegorical references, might not be used on national platforms or occasions. The two stanzas that have been recommended by the Working Committee for use as a national song have not a word or a phrase which can offend anybody from any point of view and I am surprised that any one can object to them. They may appeal to some more than to others. Some may prefer another national song; they have full freedom to do so. But to compel large numbers of people to give up what they have long valued and grown attached to is to cause needless hurt to them and injure the national movement itself. It would be improper for a national organisation to do this.

10. About Urdu and Hindi I have previously written to you and have also sent you my pamphlet on "The Question of Language." The Congress has declared in favour of guarantees for languages and culture. It wants to encourage all the great provincial languages of India and at the same time to make Hindustani, as written both in the *nagri* and Urdu scripts, the national language. Both scripts should be officially recognised and the choice should be left to the people concerned.

In fact this policy is being pursued by the Congress Ministries.

11. The Congress has long been of opinion that joint electorates are preferable to separate electorates from the point of view of national unity and harmonious cooperation between the different communities. But joint electorates, in order to have real value, must not be imposed on unwilling groups. Hence the Congress is quite clear that their introduction should depend on their acceptance by the people concerned. This is the policy that is being pursued by the Congress Ministries in regard to local bodies. Recently in a bill dealing with local bodies introduced in the Bombay Assembly, separate electorates were maintained but an option was given to the people concerned to adopt a joint electorate, if they so chose. This principle seems to be in exact accordance with No. 5 of the Fourteen Points, which lays down that "Representation of communal groups shall continue to be by means of separate electorate as at present, provided that it shall be open to any community, at any time, to abandon its separate electorate in favour of joint electorate." It surprises me that the Muslim League group in the Bombay Assembly should have opposed the Bill with its optional clause although this carried out the very policy of the Muslim League.

May I also point out that in the resolution passed by the Muslim League in 1929, at the time it adopted the Fourteen Points, it was stated that "the Musalmans will not consent to joint electorates unless Sind is actually constituted into a separate province and reforms in fact are introduced in the N.-W. F. Province and Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces." Since then Sind has been separated and the N.-W. F. Province has been placed on a level with other provinces. So far as Baluchistan is concerned the Congress is committed to a levelling up of this area in the same

way.

12. The National tri-colour Flag was adopted originally in 1920 by the Congress after full and careful consultation with eminent Muslim, Sikh and other leaders. Obviously a country and a national movement must have a national flag representing the nation and all communities in it. No communal flag can represent the nation. If we did not possess a national flag now we would have to evolve one. The present National Flag had its colours originally selected in order to represent the various communities, but we did not like to lay stress on this communal aspect of the colours. Artistically I think the combination of orange, white and green has resulted in a flag which is probably the most beautiful of all national flags. For these many years our flag has been used and it has spread to the remotest village and brought hope and courage and a sense of all India unity to our masses. It has been associated with great sacrifices on the part of our people, including Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, and many have suffered lathi blows and imprisonment and even death in defending it from insult or injury. Thus a powerful sentiment has grown up in its favour. On innumerable occasions Maulana Mohamad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali and many leaders of the Muslim League today have associated themselves with this flag and emphasised its virtues and significance as a symbol of Indian unity. It has spread outside the Congress ranks and been generally recognised as the flag of the nation. It is difficult to understand how anyone can reasonably object to it now.

Communal flags cannot obviously take its place for that can only mean a host of flags of various communities being used together and thus emphasising our disunity and separateness. Communal flags might be used for religious functions but they have no place at any national function or over any public building meant for various communities.

May I add that during the past few months, on several occasions, the National Flag has been insulted by some members or volunteers of the Muslim League. This has pained us greatly but we have deliberately avoided anything in the nature of conflict in order not to add to communal bitterness. We have also issued strict orders, and they have been obeyed, that no interference should take place with the Muslim League Flag, even though it might be inappropriately displayed.

13. I do not understand what is meant by our recognition of the Muslim League as the one and only organisation of Indian Muslims. Obviously the Muslim League is an important communal organisation and we deal with it as such. But we have to deal with all organisations and individuals that come within our ken. We do not determine the measure of importance or distinction they possess. There are a large number, about a hundred thousand, of Muslims on the Congress rolls, many of whom have been our close companions, in prisons and outside, for many years and we value their comradeship highly. There are many organisations which contain Muslims and non-Muslims alike, such as Trade Unions, Peasant Unions, Kisan Sabhas, Debt Committees, zamindar associations, Chambers of Commerce, Employers Associations' etc. and we have contacts with them. There are special Muslim organisations such as the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Proja Party, the Ahrars and others, which claim attention. Inevitably the more important the organisation the more the attention paid to it, but this importance does not come from outside recognition but from inherent strength. And the other organisations, even though they might be younger and smaller, cannot be ignored.

14. I should like to know what is meant by coalition ministries. A ministry must have a definite political and economic programme and policy. Any other kind of ministry would be a disjointed and ineffective body,

with no clear mind or direction. Given a common political and economic programme and policy, co-operation is easy. You know probably that some such cooperation was sought for and obtained by the Congress in the Frontier province. In Bombay also repeated attempts were made on behalf of the Congress to obtain this cooperation on the basis of a common programme. The Congress has gone to the Assemblies with a definite programme and in furtherance of a clear policy. It will always gladly cooperate with other groups, whether it is in a majority or a minority in an Assembly, in furtherance of that programme and policy. On that basis I can conceive of even coalition ministries being formed. Without that basis the Congress has no interest in a Ministry or in an Assembly.

I have dealt, I am afraid at exceeding length, with the various points raised in your letter and its enclosures. I am glad that I have had a glimpse into your mind through this correspondence as this enables me to understand a little better the problems that are before you and perhaps others. I agree entirely that it is the duty of every Indian to bring about harmonious joint effort of all of us for the achievement of India's freedom and the ending of the poverty of her people. For me, and I take it for most of us, the Congress has been a means to that end and not an end in itself. It has been a high privilege for us to work through the Congress because it has drawn to itself the love of millions of our countrymen, and through their sacrifice and united effort, taken us a long way to our goal. But much remains to be done and we have all to pull together to that end.

Personally the idea of pacts and the like does not appeal to me, though perhaps they might be necessary occasionally. What seems to me far more important is a more basic understanding of each other, bringing with it the desire and ability to cooperate together. That larger cooperation, if it is to include our millions, must

necessarily be in the interests of these millions. My mind therefore is continually occupied with the problems of these unhappy masses of this country and I view all other problems in this light. I should like to view the communal problem also in this perspective for otherwise it has no great significance for me.

You seem to imagine that I wanted you to put forward suggestions as a petitioner, and then you propose that the Congress should officially communicate with you. Surely you have misunderstood me and done yourself and me an injustice. There is no question of petitioning either by you or by me, but a desire to understand each other and the problem that we have been discussing. I do not understand the significance of your wanting an official intimation from the Congress. I did not ask you for an official reply on behalf of the Muslim League. Organisations do not function in this way. It is not a question of prestige for the Congress or for any of us, for we are keener on reaching the goal we have set before us, then on small matters of prestige. The Congress is a great enough organisation to ignore such petty matters, and if some of us have gained a measure of influence and popularity, we have done so in the shadow of the Congress.

You will remember that I took the initiative in writing to you and requesting you to enlighten me as to what your objections were to the Congress policy and what, according to you, were the points in dispute. I had read many of your speeches, as reported in the press, and I found to my regret that they were full of strong attacks on the Congress which, according to my way of thinking, were not justified. I wanted to remove any misunderstandings, where such existed, and to clear the air.

I have found, chiefly in the Urdu press, the most astounding falsehoods about the Congress. I refer to facts, not to opinions, and to facts within my knowledge.

Two days ago, here in Calcutta, I saw a circular letter or notice issued by a secretary of a Muslim League. This contained a list of the so-called misdeeds of the U. P. Government. I read this with amazement for there was not an atom of truth in most of the charges. I suppose they were garnered from the Urdu press. Through the press and the platform such charges have been repeated on numerous occasions and communal passions have thus been roused and bitterness created. This has grieved me and I have sought by writing to you and to Nawab Ismail Khan to find a way of checking this deplorable deterioration of our public life, as well as surer basis for cooperation. That problem still faces us and I hope we shall solve it.

I have mentioned earlier in this letter the critical international situation and the terrible sense of impending catastrophe that hangs over the world. My mind is obsessed with this and I want India to realise it and be ready for all consequences, good or ill, that may flow from it. In this period of world crisis all of us, to whatever party or group we might belong and whatever our differences might be, have the primary duty of holding together to protect our people from the perils that might encompass them. Our differences and arguments seem trivial when the future of the world and of India hangs in the balance. It is in the hope that all of us will succeed in building up this larger unity in our country that I have written to you and others repeatedly and at length.

There is one small matter I should like to mention. The report of my speech at Haripura, as given in your letter and the newspaper article, is not correct.

We have been corresponding for some time and many vague rumours float about as to what we have been saying to each other. Anxious inquiries come to me and I have no doubt that similar inquiries are addressed to you also. I think that we might take the

public into our confidence now for this is a public matter in which many are interested. I suggest therefore that our correspondence might be released to the press. I presume you will have no objection.

Yours sincerely,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

LITTLE GIBBS ROAD
MALABAR HILL,
Bombay, April 12, 1938

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,
Allahabad,
U. P.

Dear Pandit Jawaharlal,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 6th April, 1938. I am extremely obliged to you for informing me that you propose to return to Allahabad and shall probably be there for the greater part of April and suggesting that, if it would be convenient for me to come there, we could meet, or, if it suits me better to go to Lucknow, you will try to go there. I am afraid that it is not possible for me owing to my other engagements, but I shall be in Bombay about the end of April and if it is convenient to you, I shall be very glad to meet you.

As to the rest of your letter, it has been to me a most painful reading. It seems to me that you cannot even accurately interpret my letter, as you very honestly say that your "mind is obsessed with the International situation and the terrible sense of impending catastrophe that hangs over the world," so you are thinking in terms entirely divorced from realities which face us in India. I can only express my great regret at your turning and

twisting what I wrote to you and putting entirely a wrong complexion upon the position I have placed before you at your request. You have formulated certain points in your letter which you father upon me to begin with as my proposals. I sent you extracts from the press which had recently appeared simply because I believed you when you repeatedly asserted and appealed to me that you would be grateful if I would refer you to any recent statements made in the press or platform which would help you in understanding matters. Those are some of the matters which are undoubtedly agitating Muslim India, but the question how to meet them and to what extent and by what means and methods, is the business, as I have said before, of every true nationalist to solve. Whether constitutional changes are necessary, whether we should do it by agreement or conventions and so forth, are matters, I thought, were for discussion, but I am extremely sorry to find that you have in your letter already pronounced your judgment and given your decisions on a good many of them with a preamble which negatives any suggestion of discussion which may lead to a settlement, as you start by saying "I was so much surprised to see this list as I have no idea that you wanted to discuss many of these matters with us ; some of these are wholly covered by previous decisions of the Congress, some others are hardly capable of discussion," and then you proceed to your conclusions having formulated the points according to your own notions. Your tone and language again display the same arrogance and militant spirit as if the Congress is the sovereign power, and, as an indication, you extend your patronage by saying that "obviously the Muslim League is an important communal organisation and we deal with it as such, as we have to deal with all organisations and individuals that come within our ken. We do not determine the measure of importance or distinction they possess" and then you mention various other organisa-

tions. Here I may add that in my opinion, as I have publicly stated so often, that, unless the Congress recognises the Muslim League on a footing of complete equality and is prepared as such to negotiate for a Hindu-Muslim settlement, we shall have to wait and depend upon our inherent strength which will "determine the measure of importance or distinction it possesses." Having regard to your mentality it is really difficult for me to make you understand the position any further. Of course, as I have said before, I do not propose to discuss the various matters, referred to by you, by means of or through correspondence, as, in my opinion, that is not the way to tackle this matter.

With regard to your reference to certain falsehoods that have appeared about the Congress in the Urdu press, which, you say, have astounded you, and with regard to the circular letter referred to about the misdeeds of the U. P. Government I can express no opinion without investigation but I can give you any number of instances of falsehoods that have appeared in the Congress press and in statements of Congressmen with regard to the All-India Muslim League, some of the leaders and those who are connected with it. Similarly I can give you instances of reports appearing in the Congress press and speeches of Congressmen which are daily deliberately misrepresenting and villifying the Muslim composition of the Bengal, Punjab, Sind and Assam Governments with a view to break those Governments, but that is not the subject-matter of our correspondence and besides no useful purpose will be served in doing so.

With regard to your request that our correspondence should be released to the press, I have no objection provided the correspondence between me and Mr. Gandhi is also published simultaneously, as we both have referred to him and his correspondence with me in ours. You will please therefore obtain the permission

of Mr. Gandhi to that effect or, if you wish, I will write to him, informing him that you desire to release the correspondence between us to the press and I am willing to agree to it provided he agrees that the correspondence between him and myself is also released.

Yours sincerely,

M. A. JINNAH

ANAND BHAWAN

Allahabad, April 16, 1938

M. A. Jinnah, Esqr.

Little Gibbs Road, Bombay

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

Your letter of April 12th has just reached me.

I am exceedingly sorry that anything that I have written to you should have caused you pain. It seems to be true that we approach public problems from different standpoints and inevitably I try to place my viewpoint before you and seek to gain your appreciation of it. To say anything that might pain you would defeat my own purpose, even apart from its impropriety. At the same time I owe it to you and to myself to endeavour to place frankly before you how my mind works and what my views are on the subject-matter under discussion. Our viewpoints might differ, but I do believe that the margin of difference can be lessened by a frank approach on either side. I have sought to make this approach in all sincerity and with every desire on my part not to say anything that might come in the way.

In my last letter I dealt with the various points mentioned in the extracts you had sent me as I presumed that, as you had drawn my attention to them, they might

to a large extent represent what you had in mind. As you know I have been trying to get at these points of difference and when I saw something concrete I wanted to give my reaction to it. I tried to state what the Congress opinion has been in regard to them. There is no finality in day-to-day politics, although certain principles are supposed to govern policies. It is for the Congress, if it so chooses, to vary any policy. All I can do is to state what the past and present policy is.

I regret that you think that I write in an arrogant and militant spirit and as if I considered the Congress as the sovereign power. I am painfully conscious of the fact that the Congress is not a sovereign power and that it is limited and circumscribed in a hundred ways and further that it may have to go through the wilderness many a time again before it achieves its objective. You have referred to my obsession with the international situation and the sense of impending catastrophe that possesses me. If I feel that way, as I do, I can hardly grow complacent or imagine that the Congress is sovereign. But when I discuss Congress policies, as a Congressman I can only repeat what these are and not bring in my own particular views on the subject, if these happen to be at variance with Congress resolutions.

You point out to me that the Congress press has contained numerous falsehoods in regard to the Muslim League and some of its leaders, as well as the provincial governments of Bengal, Punjab, Sind and Assam. I entirely agree with you that falsehoods, misrepresentations and insinuations are to be deprecated and countered wherever they might occur, in the Urdu, Hindi or English press, or whatever the political complexion of the newspaper. There is no such thing as the Congress Press over which the Congress has control, but it is true that many newspapers generally support the Congress. But whether we can influence them or not, we certainly

want to stop all such false and misleading statements and to express our disapproval of them. In this matter I can only beg of you to point out specific instances so that we might take necessary action.

I note what you say about the publication of our correspondence. I have not got with me copies of your correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi. I am therefore writing to him to seek his permission as suggested by you.

I am afraid it will hardly be possible for me to visit Bombay in April or May. Early in June I intend sailing for Europe. In case I go to Bombay earlier I shall inform you so that we might have the opportunity of meeting. I understand that you will be meeting Mahatma Gandhi in the near future.

Yours sincerely,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

MUSTAFA CASTLE
Meerut, April 13th

My dear Panditji,

I received your letter of April the 7th only this morning. I hasten to say that I have personally no objection to the letters I have written to you being released to the press, though I must say that at the time this correspondence was started, it was not mentioned that it will ultimately be used for publication. I cannot say what view Mr. Jinnah will take of your suggestion. He will no doubt let you know.

Yours sincerely,
M. ISMAIL KHAN

Shri M. A. Jinnah sent Shree B. G. Kher with a special message to Gandhiji about Hindu Muslim Unity. Shree Kher saw Gandhiji at Tithal. As a result of their conversation Gandhiji addressed the following letter to Shri Jinnah from Tithal :

Tithal, May 22, 1937

Dear Shri Jinnah,

Kher has given me your message. I wish I could do something, but I am utterly helpless. My faith in unity is bright as ever ; only I see no daylight out of the impenetrable darkness, and in such distress I cry out to God for light.

Yours sincerely

M. K. GANDHI

Shegaon, Wardha, October 19, 1937

Dear friend,

I carefully went through your speech at Lucknow and I felt deeply hurt over your misunderstanding of my attitude. My letter was in answer to the specially private message you sent me. It represented my deepest feeling. The letter was purely personal. Were you right in using it as you did ? Of course, as I read it, the whole of your speech is a declaration of war. Only, I had hoped you would reserve poor me as a bridge between the two. I see you want no bridge ; if so I am sorry. Only it takes two to make a quarrel. You won't find me one even if I cannot become a peace-maker. This is not for publication unless you desire it. It is written in all good faith and out of an anguished heart.

Yours sincerely

M. K. GANDHI

Bombay, November 5, 1937

Dear Gandhiji,

I received your letter dated October 19, 1937, on my arrival here. As regards publishing your letter from Teethal last May, I am of opinion that I am fully justified in doing so; but your letter means something different from what I understand it to mean. Surely, it was open to you to offer your explanation to the public. The letter was not marked, as it is usual to do so when its publication was not desired by the writer, and my message to you was not private. Even now you don't indicate how I have misunderstood your attitude or the contents of that letter. You merely say: 'I felt deeply hurt over your misunderstanding of my attitude.' I am sorry you think my speech at Lucknow is a declaration of war. It is purely in self-defence. Kindly read it again and try and understand it. Evidently you have not been following the course of events in the last twelve months. As to reserving you as a 'bridge' and 'peace-maker,' don't you think your complete silence for all these months identified you with the Congress leadership, although I know you are not even a four-anna member of that body? In conclusion, I regret to say that I find nothing definite or any constructive proposal in your letter under reply except that it is written in all good faith and out of an anguished heart, which I reciprocate.

Yours sincerely

M. A. JINNAH

Shogaon, February 3, 1938

Dear Shri Jinnah,

Pandit Nehru told me yesterday that you were complaining to Maulana Saheb about the absence of any reply from me to your letter of 5th November in

reply to mine of 19th October. The letter was received by me when I was pronounced by the doctors to be seriously ill in Calcutta. The letter was shown to me three days after its receipt. Had I thought it necessarily called for a reply, even though I was ill, I would have sent one. I have re-read the letter. I still think there was nothing useful that I could have said in reply. But, in a way, I am glad you awaited a reply. Here it is. Shri Kher told me definitely he had a private message from you. He delivered it to me when I was alone. I could have sent you a verbal message in reply—but in order to give you a true picture of my mental state I sent you a short note. There was nothing to hide in it. But I did feel, as I still do, that the way in which you used it came upon me as a painful surprise.

You complain of my silence. The reason for my silence is literally and truly in my note. Believe me, the moment I can do something that can bring the two communities together nothing in the world can prevent me from so doing. You seem to deny that your speech was a declaration of war, but your later pronouncements too confirm my first impression. How can I prove what is a matter of feeling? In your speeches I miss the old nationalist. When in 1915 I returned from my self-imposed exile in South Africa everybody spoke of you as one of the staunchest of nationalists and the hope of both the Hindus and Musalmans. Are you still the same Jinnah? If you say you are, in spite of your speeches, I shall accept your word.

Lastly, you want me to come forward with some proposal. What proposal can I make except to ask you on bended knees to be what I thought you were? But the proposals to form a basis of unity between the two communities have surely got to come from you.

surely got to come from you.' I think you might have spared your appeal and need not have preached to me on your bended knees to be what you had thought I was. As regards the formation of proposals which would form the basis of unity, do you think that this can be done by correspondence? Surely, you know as much as I do, what are the fundamental points in dispute. In my opinion it is as much upto you to suggest ways and means of tackling the problem. If you genuinely and sincerely desire and you feel that the moment has come for you to step in and with your position and influence you are prepared to take the matter up earnestly, I will not fail to render all the assistance I can.

Yours sincerely
M. A. JINNAH

Shegaon, Wardha, February 24, 1938

Dear Shri Jinnah,

I thank you for your letter. I have read your letter to Jawaharlal also. I observe that both the letters invite not written replies but personal discussion. I do not know whether it will take place in the first instance between you and Jawaharlal or now that Subhas Bose succeeds him, between you and the latter. If you desire that before this there should be a talk between you and me, I would be delighted to see you in Shegaon any time which is convenient to you before 10th March, after which, if health permits I might have to go to Bengal. So far as I am concerned, just as in the Hindu-Muslim question I was guided by Dr. Ansari, now that he is no more in our midst, I have accepted Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as my guide. My suggestion, therefore, to you is that conversation should be opened in

the first place as between you and Maulana Saheb. But in every case, regard me as at your disposal.

Yours sincerely
M. K. GANDHI

New Delhi, March 3

Dear Gandhiji,

I have received your letter dated 24th February. I am sorry for the delay in replying as I was not well. In your letter I missed a note of response first whether you are of opinion that you see light now and the moment has come, and secondly, if so, whether you are prepared to take the matter up in right earnest; and thirdly, I find there is no change in your attitude and mentality when you say you would be guided by Maulana as Dr. Ansari is no more. If you pursue this line, you will be repeating the same tragedy as you did when you expressed your helplessness because Dr. Ansari, holding pronounced and diehard views, did not agree and you had to say although you were willing but what could you do. This happened as you know before you went to the Round Table Conference. At the Round Table Conference the tragedy was repeated by you when you seemed to be willing to accept provisionally certain terms; but you there also expressed you were helpless as Hindus were unwilling and you, as representing the Congress, would have no objection, if Hindus and Mussalmans came to an agreement.

We have reached a stage when no doubt should be left that you recognise the All-India Muslim League as the one authoritative and representative organisation of Mussalmans of India, and on the other hand you represent the Congress and other Hindus throughout the country. It is only on that basis that we can proceed further and devise a machinery of approach. Of course,

I shall be glad to see you although I shall equally be glad to see Pandit Jawaharlal or Shri Bose as you may desire ; the matter, as you know, will not be clinched without reference again to you by either of them. Therefore, I will prefer to see you first. In any case, I am sorry to say I cannot come to Shegaon to see you before 10th March. I have to go to Bombay and also I have fixed various other engagements of my tour ; but we can fix up a time and place that may suit us both.

Yours sincerely

M. A. JINNAH

Shegaon, Wardha, March 8

Dear Shri Jinnah,

I thank you for your letter. I hope you have completely got over your indisposition. Your letter revives painful memories. I will not discuss, at this stage, at any rate, the various debatable points raised in your letter. Suffice it to say that I am at your disposal. If you cannot come to Shegaon, and my health permits I will gladly go to Bombay to meet you when you are there. At present I have to go to Bengal and then for a while to Orissa. This will take me through the whole of this month. The earliest, therefore we can meet will be in April.

Two questions arising from your letter demand a reply. You ask me whether I have now seen the light. Much to my regret I have to say, 'no.' If I had, I would proclaim the news from the house-tops. But that limitation does not debar me from taking advantage of the slightest opportunity of finding a way out of the present difficulty. You expect me to be able to speak on behalf of the 'Congress and other Hindus throughout the country.' I am afraid, I cannot fulfil the test. I cannot represent either the Congress or the Hindus

in the sense you mean, but I would exert to the utmost all the moral influence I could have with them in order to secure a honourable settlement.

Yours sincerely
M. K. GANDHI

New Delhi, March 17

Dear Gandhiji,

I am in receipt of your letter of March 8, and I thank you for it. As you do not wish to discuss the various points mentioned in my letter and the two questions which you have answered are far from hopeful, I am helpless. However, as you say 'suffice it to say I am at your disposal,' I gather you would nevertheless like to take advantage of the slightest opportunity of finding a way out of the present difficulty. In these circumstances, I beg to inform you I shall be glad to see you at Bombay sometime in April as suggested by you.

Yours sincerely
M. A. JINNAH

Calcutta, March 24

Dear Shri Jinnah,

Many thanks for your note. As soon as I reach Shegaon, I shall seek the first opportunity of waiting on you at Bombay.

New Delhi, March 26

Dear Gandhiji,

I thank you for your letter of 24th March and I shall be very glad to see you after my return from Calcutta about 25th April at Bombay.

Telegram sent to Shri Jinnah from Gandhiji dated April 9, 1938.

"I am likely to be in Delhi about 12th. If at all possible I should like meet you there instead Bombay in order save time energy. If agreeable, Moulana will accompany me."

The following is a copy of telegram from Gandhiji to Shri Jinnah despatched from Delhi on April 15 :

"If on return Bombay you can break journey Wardha for one day you will spare me strain undertaking journey Bombay. I need some uninterrupted physical rest if possible. Any event could Maulana Azad accompany me interview. Please wire Wardha which reaching to-morrow."

Shri Jinnah replied from Calcutta by wire on April 16 as follows :

"Extremely sorry unable change programme now. Will receive you Bombay 25th or thereafter as arranged. Would prefer see you alone."

The following telegram was sent by Gandhiji to Shri Jinnah from Wardha on April 18 :

"Thanks 25th happens Monday. Will reach Bombay 28th if not inconvenient."

Shri Jinnah wired back from Calcutta on April 19 :

"Thanks. Will gladly receive you 28th my house. Wire time care Ispahani, Calcutta."

Gandhiji wired to Shri Jinnah from Wardha on April 20 :

"If not inconvenient would like reach your house eleven thirty A.M."